



Official Statement: World Malaria Day

By: H.E. Amira Elfadil Mohamed - Commissioner for Health, Humanitarian Affairs and Social Development, African Union Commission

25 April 2021, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia – World Malaria Day 2021 comes at a time when healthcare systems in Africa bear the anomalous weight of the coronavirus pandemic. African Union (AU) Member States have maintained their focus in the fight against malaria even as the pandemic continues to test the limits of health infrastructure at the country level. I take the opportunity to recognise and appreciate all AU Member States for ensuring that comprehensive approaches like education, prevention, diagnosis, and treatment - that have been proven to have tangible results in the fight against malaria - have been sustained during the pandemic.

Today, the African Union Commission (AUC) joins the world to celebrate the seven million lives saved, and over one billion malaria cases averted through life-saving mosquito nets, among other interventions. The Commission, as taken note of this year's theme, "Zero Malaria - Draw the Line Against Malaria," with the fullest commitment that all must work together to end malaria by 2030. As a continent, we celebrate with great honour and pride the AU Member States that have been certified malaria-free. I encourage these Member States to lead continental knowledge-sharing initiatives so that best elimination practices are exchanged and scaled-up..

Africa is making headway in defeating malaria through strong political commitment, increased funding, and innovations devised to improve malaria prevention and control. Most of the achievements have been realized through the **Zero Malaria Starts With Me Campaign** implemented by the Commission in partnership with the African Leaders Malaria Alliance (ALMA) and Roll Back Malaria (RBM) Partnership to End Malaria. To date, nineteen (19) AU Member States have rolled out the Campaign, seven (7) of which launched in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic. While more Member States are

working towards launching the Campaign, the Commission welcomes the collaborative effort to urge Africa leaders to step up and be a part of the zero-malaria movement.

The ***Zero Malaria Starts With Me Campaign*** is transforming the continent's malaria response and inspiring global action. This Campaign's advancement and impact have demonstrated AU Member States' dedication to reach the targets set in the Africa Health Strategy and the Catalytic Framework to End AIDS, TB, and. Eliminate Malaria in Africa by 2030. The Campaign's focus is to empower the youth's involvement in the malaria response. The leadership of youth in Africa is crucial as young people account for 75% of the continent's population. Youth are the driving force of the continent. I commend H.E Uhuru Kenyatta, President of the Republic of Kenya, for launching the Digital Youth Malaria Army initiative. With the support of ALMA, the work of the Army is shaped by strategic guidance from the ALMA Youth Advisory Council, consisting of representatives from all regions in Africa. Partners also have opportunities through which youth can be empowered for leadership in the fight against malaria, including the RBM Digital Youth Workstream and Draw the Line against Malaria Youth Champions. I encourage Africa's youth to join these initiatives to ensure their communities and peers' voices are heard.

In conclusion, I emphasize on the critical role of multisectoral partnerships in achieving significant strides towards the shared goal of malaria elimination. We need more partnerships and resources to innovate and improve surveillance programs. As we commemorate World Malaria Day 2021, I call on frontline health workers , partners, and leaders worldwide and in Africa to share experiences and reflections on efforts and opportunities to reach the target of zero malaria.

I reiterate that ending malaria's scourge will have a long-term, transformative impact and save millions of lives. The Commission will continue to support the AU Member States to Draw the Line Against Malaria.

#ZeroMalariaStartsWithMe.

I thank you